



TESTIMONY OF

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DIRECTOR, AMERICA 2050
REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION**

ON BEHALF OF

THE BUSINESS ALLIANCE FOR NORTHEAST MOBILITY

REGARDING

THE FUTURE OF HIGH-SPEED RAIL IN THE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

January 27, 2011
Field Hearing on

HIGH-SPEED RAIL IN THE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

Chairman Mica and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the future of high-speed rail in the Northeast Corridor. I am speaking on behalf of the Business Alliance for Northeast Mobility, a coalition of over 30 leading business and civic groups from Boston to Washington, DC, which came together in 2006 to support federal appropriations for making improvements to Amtrak's Northeast Corridor because of its indispensable role in the Northeast Megaregion's economy. I am here to inform the Committee of the Business Alliance's strong support for bringing the Northeast Corridor to a state of good repair and exploring dedicated high-speed rail service in the corridor in order to boost economic growth in the region.

The Northeast Corridor moves approximately three-quarters of a million people per day to their jobs or among the major downtown business hubs of the Northeast Megaregion. These movements are critical to the Northeast's \$2.6 trillion economy, which accounts for roughly one-fifth of the U.S. GDP. Imagine if 750,000 additional daily passengers were suddenly added to Interstate-95 and the Northeast's major airports (already the most congested in the nation). Our transportation networks would come to a standstill, as they regularly do already, because of their inadequate capacity and failure to meet existing demand.

In 2008, the Business Alliance strongly supported the passage of PRIIA, the Passenger Rail Investment Improvement Act, which provided a dependable rail authorization for Amtrak and created the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program, through which high-speed rail funding was appropriated in the stimulus bill and the Fiscal Year 2010 budget.

Unfortunately, we have only begun to chip away at the \$8.7 billion backlog in deferred maintenance that has accumulated on the Corridor, due to inadequate federal funding. As a coalition, our top priority has been to secure funding to bring the Corridor to a state of good repair, which we see as a federal responsibility, stemming from the federal government's creation of Amtrak and the direct impact of the Northeast Corridor on the economy of twelve states and the nation's global economic competitiveness.

While the immediate and urgent challenge is to maintain the Corridor's existing rail infrastructure, the Alliance is also looking ahead to the improvements needed to accommodate the growth of the Northeast economy. Specifically, we support building two new dedicated high-speed rail tracks along the length of the Northeast Corridor to significantly reduce trip times and substantially increase capacity, convenience and reliability, while dramatically enhancing the global competitiveness of the Northeast.

The recent Amtrak and Penn Design Visions for dedicated high-speed rail in the Northeast Corridor have shown the feasibility of building world class high-speed rail here, slashing trip times to less than two hours from New York to Boston and New York to Washington, while providing up to 12 trains per hour. The costs of these improvements are estimated at \$5 billion annually or approximately \$117 billion over the next 30 years.

Upon completion, the Amtrak plan estimates a \$900 million annual operating surplus with revenues from fares, food, and other services outweighing total operation and maintenance costs. It also envisions an interoperable system in which new high-speed lines interconnect at key points with existing Northeast Corridor operations facilitating a comprehensive service plan. Such a plan will enable all communities in the megaregion to have access to the new service and benefit from this public/private investment.

The Northeast Corridor has the population density, concentrations of employment, connections to rail transit networks, and proven demand between city pairs to justify this investment.

For example, in the five largest metropolitan regions along the Northeast Corridor alone, almost 19 million people *work* within 25 miles of a major train station. More than 34 million people in these five regions *live* within 25 miles of a major train station. One-third of the inhabitants of major metropolitan areas in the Northeast are within walking distance of a rail transit station with connecting service to intercity rail stations on the Northeast Corridor. These figures of population and employment density around rail in the Northeast dwarf those of every other megaregion in the nation. Further, as these high-speed lines are built, it will reinforce private sector investment and development in these existing employment nodes, insuring that population and job growth can occur in a way that will reduce our dependency on foreign oil.

But it is critical that we get started in building these plans, while we still have the momentum of a new national commitment to high-speed rail in America. Unfortunately, the mainline Northeast Corridor was largely excluded from major capitol grants awarded in the first two rounds of high-speed rail grants in 2010 because we lacked an up-to-date Environmental Impact Statement for the corridor. A year later, this EIS has not begun.

In December, the Business Alliance sent a letter to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, asking for his leadership to expedite the corridor-wide EIS process and we met recently with his staff to discuss the details. We are anxiously awaiting the start of the EIS process, which should consider all of the major proposals for meeting the capacity and travel needs on the Corridor for future generations – including the Northeast Corridor Master Plan completed through the cooperation of twelve states and the District of Columbia in 2010, Amtrak's Next Generation Vision, and the PennDesign plan.

Once scoped, we ask for the help of the Committee in looking into ways that the Northeast Corridor EIS process can be tiered and shortened so we do not waste another two or more years waiting for its completion to start construction.

Finally, we do believe the private sector has an important role to play beyond the traditional engineering and construction contracts placed by public agencies in delivering large capital projects such as East Side Access bringing Long Island Rail Road commuter service to this location where we meet today, and we would like to meet with you, Mr. Chair, and the Committee members, to discuss specific proposals for public private partnerships in the Northeast Corridor.

However, the necessary precursor to private investment and implementation is agreement on the vision. And for this, we ask you for your leadership. We ask for your support of a bold vision for the Northeast Corridor. And we ask for you to work with the Northeast states and Amtrak and the business community to agree on a practical strategy for accommodating the 21st century transportation needs of the Northeast and national economy.

LIST OF BUSINESS ALLIANCE FOR NORTHEAST MOBILITY MEMBERS

1000 Friends of Connecticut
A Better City
AECOM
American Institute of Architects, New York Chapter
The Boston Foundation
The Business Council of Fairfield County
The Business Council of New York State
The BWI Business Partnership, Inc.
Capitol Region Council of Governments
Centerstate CEO
Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance
Central Philadelphia Development Corporation
Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce
CEO Council for Growth/Greater Philadelphia
Chamber of Commerce
Chesapeake Crescent Initiative
Connecticut Economic Resources Center (CERC)
Connecticut Technology Council
Delaware State Chamber of Commerce
General Contractors Association of New York
Greater Baltimore Committee
Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce
Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce
Greater Washington Board of Trade
Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce
Metro Hartford Alliance
Middlesex County Regional Chamber of Commerce
New Castle County Chamber of Commerce
New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce
Newark Regional Business Partnership
Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Providence-Warwick Convention and Visitors Bureau
Regional Plan Association
Select Greater Philadelphia
Stamford Urban Redevelopment Commission
Staten Island Chamber of Commerce
TranSystems
Washington, D.C. Convention & Tourism Corporation

Petra Todorovich

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director, America 2050, Regional Plan Association (RPA), New York, NY (May 2007 - present):

- Directs a national urban planning initiative to develop an infrastructure and growth strategy for the United States, in consultation with a national network of business, civic and policy leaders.
- Oversees America 2050's research and policy analysis on transportation, energy and water infrastructure, writing, editing and design of America 2050 publications and research papers, creation of America 2050 website www.America2050.org.
- Facilitates and plans frequent high-level policy forums including most recently, the Roundtable on Envisioning a Trans-American Network (Dec 08) The National Roundtable on Surface Transportation (Feb 07), Healdsburg Research Seminar on Megaregions (April 07, Mar 06), and the Rockefeller Foundation Global Urban Summit (July 07) in Bellagio, Italy.
- Directed a series of 8 national "Rebuilding and Renewing America" conferences nationwide in 2008-2009.
- Frequent speaker and lecturer on transportation policy, megaregions, and national planning.

Assistant Visiting Professor, Pratt Institute, Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment, Brooklyn, New York (September 2009 to present)

- Teaches graduate course on Metropolitan Regional Planning, fall semester.

Senior Planner (Jun 2005 – May 2007), Associate Planner (Jun 2002 – Jun 2005), Project Manager (Dec 2001 – Jun 2002), Assistant to the Executive Director (Feb 2001 – Dec 2001). Regional Plan Association (RPA), New York, NY

- Project Manager (2001-2006) of the **Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York**, a broad coalition of civic, business, community organizations and universities formed to guide redevelopment of the World Trade Center and Lower Manhattan following 9/11.
- Authored "A Civic Assessment of the Lower Manhattan Rebuilding Process" (September 2004), which evaluated the public and private rebuilding efforts since September 2001 in the context of the civic community's goals for the rebuilding process.
- Planned and executed the "Civic Alliance Planning and Design Workshop for Lower Manhattan," a four-day urban design charrette at the South Street Seaport, which explored alternative economic scenarios for the development of Lower Manhattan.
- Led RPA's efforts to plan "Listening to the City," an historic 5,000 person public meeting at the Javits Center to consider options for the redevelopment of the WTC site and Lower Manhattan in July 2002.
- Coordinated the Civic Alliance meetings at which principles and objectives for rebuilding Lower Manhattan were agreed upon by a broad coalition of the New York civic community, leading to the publication of, "A Planning Framework to Rebuild Downtown New York."

EDUCATION

Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University. Master of City and Regional Planning, May 2004.

Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York. Bachelor of Arts, May 2000.
Double Major in Geography, French. *Cum laude*.

Vassar Wesleyan Program in Paris. 1998. Conversant French speaker.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Member of the Board of Advisors, Eno Transportation Foundation, Washington, D.C.
Consultant to TransLink, the Greater Vancouver Regional Transportation Agency on their 2010 10-Year Plan and Transportation 2040, British Columbia (May 2009, October 2007)
Consultant to Istanbul Konut – (Istanbul Housing Authority) in November 2008 on Istanbul regional plan
Member of the Executive Committee, New York New Visions, a coalition of design professions for the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan 2002 - 2006
Faculty member at the International Megaregions Planning Workshop at the Fundación Metrópoli in Madrid, Spain (Feb 2006, March 2007)
Faculty member at Lincoln Institute Symposium on European Spatial Planning, Vienna, Austria (July 2005)
Participant in Brussels-New York Planning Exchange (November 2004)
Exhibitor and Speaker at the Architecture Biennale, Rotterdam, the Netherlands (May 2003)
Participant in New York to Europe Planning Delegation, visiting Berlin and Copenhagen (November 2002)
Member of the American Planning Association NY Chapter and Center for Architecture, New York City

MEDIA

Television: Guest on Fox Business News (January 2010, December 2009, and April 2009), Repeat guest on New York One “New York Tonight” with John Schumo (2002-2003)
Radio: Guest on the Brian Lehrer show on WNYC (2010, 2009, 2006, 2004) and interviews for Morning Edition (WNYC) and on BBC News.
Newspaper: Quoted in *The New York Times*, *New York Sun*, *New York Post*, *AM New York*

AWARDS

To the Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York:
World Trade Center Survivors Network “Survivors Salute” (2005)
American Society for Public Administration NY Metro Chapter Outstanding Organization Award (2003)
American Planning Association NY Metro Chapter Lawrence M. Orton Award for Leadership in City and Regional Planning (2003)

ARTICLES

“Megaregions and America’s Economic Recovery.” September 2009. *SPUR Urbanist*. P6. Issue. 486.
“The Federal Agenda for Rebuilding America.” July 2009. In Marlon G. Boarnet, Ed. *Transportation Infrastructure: The Challenges of Rebuilding America*. American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service. Report No. 557.
“An Infrastructure and Economic Recovery Plan for the United States.” January 2009. *Land Lines: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy*. Vol 21. No. 1.
“America’s Emerging Megaregions and Implications for a National Growth Strategy.” 2009. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*. Vol 22. No. 3
“Introduction.” 2007. In Kedith Goldfeld, Ed. *The Economic Geography of Megaregions*. Princeton: Policy Research Institute for the Region. Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.